

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:  
5 certifying a plurality of online entities;  
storing certification data for each of the plurality of online entities in a database;  
and  
selectively generating corresponding media objects for the online entities for  
which the respective certification data indicates successful certification, wherein each of  
10 the media objects includes media to present a unique seal of certification for each of the  
entities.
2. The method of claim 1,  
wherein certifying a plurality of online entities comprises certifying that the  
15 online entities agree to participate in an online dispute resolution process associated  
with an online marketplace, and  
wherein generating corresponding media objects comprises generating the media  
objects to provide a visual indicator that the respective online entities have been  
certified as agreeing to participate in the online dispute resolution process.  
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3. The method of claim 1, wherein generating corresponding media objects  
comprises generating the media objects as recognizable symbols associated with  
qualities of the online entities including at least one of trustworthiness, reliability, and  
superior customer service.
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4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
periodically updating the certification data for the entities; and  
modifying the media objects based on the updated certification data.
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5. The method of claim 4, wherein modifying the media objects comprises:  
generating the media objects to have a first visual appearance when the  
certification data indicates the entity is certified; and  
generating the media objects to have different visual appearances when the  
5 certification data indicates that the certifications have been revoked.
6. The method of claim 4, wherein modifying the media objects comprises deleting  
one of the media objects based on the updated data.
- 10 7. The method of claim 1, wherein certifying a plurality of online entities  
comprises verifying that the entities are a legitimate business entities.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein certifying a plurality of online entities  
comprises verifying at least one of: (a) that a business practice of the entities conforms  
15 to a standard, and (b) that the entities agree to conform to the standard.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein certifying a plurality of online entities  
comprises certifying the online entities upon receiving agreements to participate in  
online dispute resolution from the entities.
- 20 10. The method of claim 1, wherein certifying a plurality of online entities  
comprises receiving an application for certification via a network.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein the entities comprise online merchants, and the  
25 certification data includes transaction histories for the entities.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the media objects comprise images.

13. A computer-readable medium comprising instructions that cause a programmable processor to:

store certification data for a plurality of online entities within a database; and  
generate corresponding media objects for each of the online entities based on the  
5 certification data, wherein each of the media objects includes media to present a unique  
seal of certification for each of the entities.

14. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, further comprising instructions that cause a programmable processor to:

10 periodically update the certification data for the entities; and  
modify the media objects based on the updated certification data.

15. The computer-readable medium of claim 14, wherein the instructions that cause a programmable processor to modify the media objects comprise instructions that cause  
15 a programmable processor to:

generate the media objects to have a first visual appearance when the certification data indicates the entity is certified; and

generate the media objects to have different visual appearances when the certification data indicates that the certifications have been revoked.

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16. The computer-readable medium of claim 14, wherein the instructions that cause a programmable processor to modify the media objects comprises instructions that cause a programmable processor to delete one of the media objects based on the updated data.

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17. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, wherein the instructions that cause a programmable processor to store certification data comprise instructions that cause a programmable processor to store data indicating whether the entities are a legitimate business entities.

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18. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, wherein the instructions that cause a programmable processor to store certification data comprise instructions that cause a programmable processor to store data indicating at least one of (a) whether a business practice of the entities conforms to a standard, and (b) whether the entities agree to  
5 conform to the standard.

19. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, wherein the instructions that cause a programmable processor to store certification data comprise instructions that cause a programmable processor to store data indicating whether the entities have agreed to  
10 participate in online dispute resolution.

20. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, further comprising instructions that cause a programmable processor to receive an application for certification via a network.  
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21. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, wherein the entities comprise online merchants, and the instructions that cause a programmable processor to store certification data comprise instructions that cause a programmable processor to store transaction histories for the entities.  
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22. The computer-readable medium of claim 13, wherein the media objects comprise images.

23. A system comprising:  
25 a database to store certification data for a plurality of online entities; and  
a server to access the certification data, and generate corresponding media objects for each of the online entities based on the certification data, wherein each of the media objects includes media to present a unique seal of certification for each of the entities.  
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24. The system of claim 23, wherein the server generates the media objects as recognizable symbols associated with qualities of the online entities including at least one trustworthiness, reliability, and superior customer service.

5 25. The system of claim 23, wherein the server periodically accesses the database to update the certification data for the entities, and modifies the media objects based on the updated certification data.

10 26. The system of claim 25, wherein the server generates the media objects to have a first visual appearance when the certification data indicates the entity is certified, and generates the media objects to have different visual appearances when the certification data indicates that the certifications have been revoked.

15 27. The system of claim 25, wherein the server deletes one of the media objects based on the updated data.

28. The system of claim 23, wherein the database stores data that indicates whether the entities are legitimate business entities.

20 29. The system of claim 23, wherein the database stores data that indicates at least one of (a) whether a business practice of the entities conforms to a standard, and (b) whether the entities agree to conform to the standard.

25 30. The system of claim 26, wherein the database stores data that indicates whether the entities have agreed to participate in an online dispute resolution associated with an online marketplace, and wherein the server generates the media objects to provide a seal of certification indicating that the respective online entities have agreed to participate in the online dispute resolution process.

30 31. The system of claim 23, wherein the server receives an application for certification from one of the entities via a network.

32. The system of claim 23, wherein the entities comprise online merchants, and the database stores transaction histories for the entities.
- 5 33. The system of claim 23, wherein the media objects comprise images,
34. A method comprising:  
receiving agreements to participate in online dispute resolution from plurality of online entities; and  
10 generating corresponding media objects for each of the online entities based on receipt of the agreements, wherein each of the media objects includes media to present a unique seal of certification for each of the entities.
35. The method of claim 34, further comprising storing data reflecting the  
15 agreements for each of the online entities in a database,  
wherein generating corresponding media objects comprises generating corresponding media objects for each of the online entities based on the data stored in the database.
- 20 36. The method of claim 34, wherein the media objects comprise images and the entities comprises online merchants.

37. A method for providing electronic seals of certification for participants in an online marketplace or other intermediary that is accessed via a computer network and enables participants to buy and sell items comprising:

certifying participants in the online marketplace;

5 storing information for each of the participants within a database, the information for each participant including certification data that indicates a certification status that participant; and

generating corresponding media objects for each of the participants based on the certification data stored in the database, wherein each of the media objects includes  
10 media to present a unique seal of certification for each of the participants that indicates the certification status of that participant, and

wherein the media objects have a first visual appearance when the certification data indicates that entity is certified, and different visual appearances when the certification data indicates that the certifications have been revoked.

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38. The method of claim 37, further comprising:

receiving a request from a web browser executing on a client device for one of the media objects; and

communicating the requested media object to the web browser for presentment  
20 of the respective seal of certification to a user as a portion of a website associated with the online marketplace to indicate the certification status of the one of the participants in the online marketplace associated with the requested media object.

39. The method of claim 37, wherein certifying participants comprises certifying  
25 sellers within the marketplace, and

wherein communicating the requested media object to the web browser for presentment of the respective seal of certification as a portion of a website comprises communicating the requested media object to the web browser for presentment of the respective seal of certification to a buyer as a portion of a web page associated with the  
30 seller.

40. The method of claim 37, wherein certifying participants in an online marketplace comprises verifying that the participants are a legitimate business entities.

41. The method of claim 37, wherein certifying participants in an online  
5 marketplace comprises at least one of verifying that a business practice of the participants conforms to a standard and that the participants agree to conform to certain standards.

42. The method of claim 37, wherein certifying participants in an online  
10 marketplace comprises certifying the participant upon receiving agreements to participate in online dispute resolution from the participants.

43. A system comprising:  
a database to store information for each of a plurality of online entities; and  
15 a server to certify each of the online entities and generate corresponding media objects for each the online entities based on the certification, wherein each of the media objects includes media to present a unique seal for each of the entities, communicate a requested one of the media objects to a web browser for presentment of the respective seal to a user as a portion of a website, and selectively provide the information stored  
20 within the database for the entity associated with requested media object to the user via the web browser.

44. The system of claim 43, wherein after communicating the requested media object to the client device, the server receives a request from the client device to view  
25 additional information for the entity corresponding to the requested media object, retrieves the information as a function of a unique identifier provided by the request, and communicates the information to the client device for display to the user.

45. The system of claim 43, wherein the entity comprises an online merchant and  
30 the information includes a transaction history for the merchant.



46. The system of claim 43, where the server stores a disclosure setting for each entity, and filters the information based on the disclosure setting.

47. The system of claim 46, wherein the server filters the information based on a  
5 universal resource locator (URL) received during the request for the information.

48. The system of claim 43, wherein the server provides a web page that includes the information to the user.